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RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2266
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5728
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9332
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6916
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 2323
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2701
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000608

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: SUBJECT: BURMA: NLD'S WIN TIN QUESTIONED; ASSK
MEETS LAWYERS

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Classified By: Political Officer Marc Shaw for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) In a September 14 meeting with P/E Chief and Poloff, National League for Democracy (NLD) Central Executive Committee (CEC) member Win Tin confirmed media reports that he was detained and released by Burmese police September 12. Special Branch officers questioned Win Tin for one and a half hours at a police interrogation center in northern Rangoon about his alleged involvement in financial- and political-related activities. Win Tin rejected the accusations. He told us he believes the authorities are seeking to intimidate him in the wake of his September 9 Washington Post editorial and might call him back for additional questioning. The 80 year-old Win Tin told us he feels well despite recent health problems.

¶2. (C) At the same meeting, NLD Spokesman Nyan Win relayed that Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) met with her lawyers for two hours on September 10 to discuss her appeal, which the Divisional Court will hear September 18. Nyan Win reported that ASSK has formally requested a meeting with the CEC and other NLD members. End summary.

Win Tin Questioned about Financial, Political Dealings

¶3. (C) NLD CEC member and former political prisoner Win Tin confirmed media reports that he was detained and released by authorities on September 12. This was Win Tin's first interrogation since being released last year after serving a 20-year prison term. He told P/E Chief and Poloff that he initially turned away a township-level police chief, who arrived at his home at 10:30a.m. to take him into custody for questioning. He resisted, telling the police chief he was not going anywhere without explanation of where he was going, why authorities were taking him, and the topics about which police wanted to question him. Around 11:00a.m., according to Win Tin, division-level police officers arrived at his house in a car, requesting that he come in for questioning at headquarters (located in Thamine Township, north Rangoon)

about "financial- and political-related matters." He complied. Authorities questioned Win Tin for one and a half hours, but he was in custody for a total of five and a half hours (11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). Win Tin told us he had to wait while authorities sought guidance from Nay Pyi Taw.

¶4. (C) Win Tin said he rejected authorities' accusations that he was involved in questionable financial- and political-related matters. Authorities told Win Tin that some NLD youth members, who were detained six or seven months ago, had provided his name during interrogation as being involved in such activities. Win Tin did not provide further details, but told us he had done nothing illegal. He said he responded to the authorities that if they have evidence that he committed a crime, they should press charges and try him in court. He added that as a CEC member, he could not possibly break the law and joked that this was especially true since authorities keep track of his whereabouts (Note: He is regularly monitored by police). Win Tin speculated that the real reason behind his detention was the GOB's effort to intimidate him in response to his recent Washington Post editorial, "An 'Election' Burma's People Don't Need," which criticized the regime. (Note: According to Win Tin, authorities did not raise the editorial during questioning. End note.)

Another Round of Questioning?

¶5. (C) Upon release, police told Win Tin they might call him back for questioning, saying they have "strong evidence" against him. Win Tin told us he cautioned the police that he will not cooperate with them next time unless they show up with a legal justification for taking him into custody,

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information on whom he will meet, and the reasons behind his detention. Win Tin repeated throughout the meeting that authorities often go too far in Burma, showing up on people's doorstep to demand they come for questioning without mentioning the charges or providing justification. He told us he will continue to be open about his views, and added that he spoke with the media immediately after returning from his interrogation. Win Tin noted that authorities were "quite civilized" in their treatment of him, perhaps -- he joked -- because he is an old man. The 80 year-old Win Tin told us he feels well despite having a pacemaker installed recently and having three defective heart valves.

ASSK Discusses Appeal with Lawyers

¶6. (C) At the same September 14 meeting, NLD Spokesman Nyan Win relayed to P/E Chief and Poloff that ASSK met with her lawyers for two hours on September 10 to discuss the 11 legal points upon which she is basing her appeal. He did not expound on the points other than to say they include the argument that the 1974 Constitution is invalid. At ASSK's request, Nyan Win submitted a letter to Special Branch on September 11 to request that she be able to attend the first court session on September 18 when lawyers will present their arguments. On September 12, the police replied by saying the question of her presence was a matter for the court, not the police, to decide. Nyan Win said he interprets this response as a denial of her request, since she is in police custody. ASSK's lawyers will proceed as planned without ASSK present, according to Nyan Win.

¶7. (C) Nyan Win noted that ASSK asked him to pass other "political messages" (NFI) to NLD CEC members, but said he could not share the substance of the messages with the Embassy at this time. Nyan Win also reported that ASSK has formally requested to see NLD CEC leaders and other NLD members under the provisions of the SPDC directive allowing her to receive guests. She also expressed an interest in meeting with Rangoon-based Chiefs of Mission from the United

States, Australia, and European countries, but Nyan Win declined to specify if she filed a formal request to do so. He confirmed that authorities have not permitted ASSK to meet with anyone other than her lawyers since her August 11 return to house arrest, though he expects an architect may get access to the compound the week of September 21.

VAJDA